

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please substitute the following for the title of the application:

PROCESS TO PREPARE SYNTHESIS GAS AND ITS CONVERSION TO A HYDROCARBONS CONTAINING STREAM

On page 7, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 22 and ending on line 32 as follows:

Figure 1 further shows a vessel inlet (43) for natural gas and steam, a vessel inlet (38) for a hot gaseous medium (38), a vessel outlet (39) for steam reforming product and a vessel outlet (42) for the gasses, which are emitted from the passageways (23). Tube sheets (40) and (41) are present in order to fix the reactor tubes (21) and to define collecting space (45) for the gasses emitted by the passageways (23) and an inlet space (46) fluidly connecting the vessel inlet (43) for steam and natural gas and the reactor tubes (21) comprising the catalyst bed (22).

On page 9, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 16 and ending on line 23 as follows:

The above embodiment is illustrated in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows a CSR reactor vessel. For clarity reasons no internals of vessel (44) are shown in Figure 2. Also shown is a partial oxidation reactor (51) provided with a burner (52). A carbonaceous feed (50) and an oxygen containing gas (50') (not shown) is supplied to burner (52). Also shown is that the product gas (55) of step (b) is fed to the upper half of the reactor vessel (51).

On page 9, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 24 and ending on page 10, line 10 as follows:

Preferably the steam reformer product (55) is fed close, i.e. in the upper half of vessel (51), to the burner (52) in order to benefit the most of the resultant elevated temperatures from 800 up to 1050 °C present in that region of the vessel (51). The methane content in steam reformer product (55) may be between 5 and 30 mol% carbon relative to the carbon as hydrocarbon in the feed to step (b), through inlet (43). This relatively high methane content results when operating step (b) at low steam to carbon ratio as described before. Because a methane slip will be corrected by the

process of the current invention a lower reaction temperature in the CSR reactor tubes may also be allowed. A lower reaction temperature will also result in that more non-reacted methane will be part of product (55). Low temperatures in step (b) are suitably between 700 and 800 °C as measured on steam reformer product (55) as it leaves the reactor (44). A low temperature is desirable for material strength reasons for the internals used in reactor (44).

On page 10, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 11 and ending on line 20 as follows:

Figure 2 also shows a preferred autothermal reformer or post catalytic reformer catalyst bed (53) as present in the lower half of reactor vessel (51). The catalyst bed (53) may be any well-known reformer catalyst, for example a Ni-containing catalyst. The effluent (56) of optional catalyst bed (53) is subsequently fed to inlet (38) of vessel (44), wherein the gasses are cooled in the passageways (23) (not shown in this Figure) and obtained as the final synthesis gas product (63) via outlet (42).

On page 12, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 7 and ending on line 29 as follows:

Figure 3 illustrates the configuration of Figure 2 in combination with a Fischer-Tropsch synthesis process unit (64) and its downstream hydroconversion unit(s) (66), i.e. step (g). In addition to Figure 2 Figure 3 shows how the synthesis gas (63) is fed to Fischer-Tropsch synthesis process unit (64). In unit (64) a gaseous recycle stream (54) is separated from the hydrocarbon product (65) and recycled to partial oxidation reactor (51). Also shown is how part (60) of the steam reformer product (55) having a relatively high hydrogen over CO molar ratio is fed to a hydrogen recovery unit (61) to obtain hydrogen (62) suitably for use in hydroprocessing unit(s) (66). In said units the hydrocarbon product present in (65), comprising typically a relatively large portion of compounds boiling above 370 °C, is converted by well-known hydrocracking and hydroisomerisation processes to middle distillates (67). Any remaining residue may be further converted to base oils by catalytic dewaxing processes (not shown), which also require hydrogen. Examples of such downstream hydroprocessing units are described in for example WO-A-0107538, WO-02070631, WO-02070629 and WO-02070627 and in the references cited in these publications.